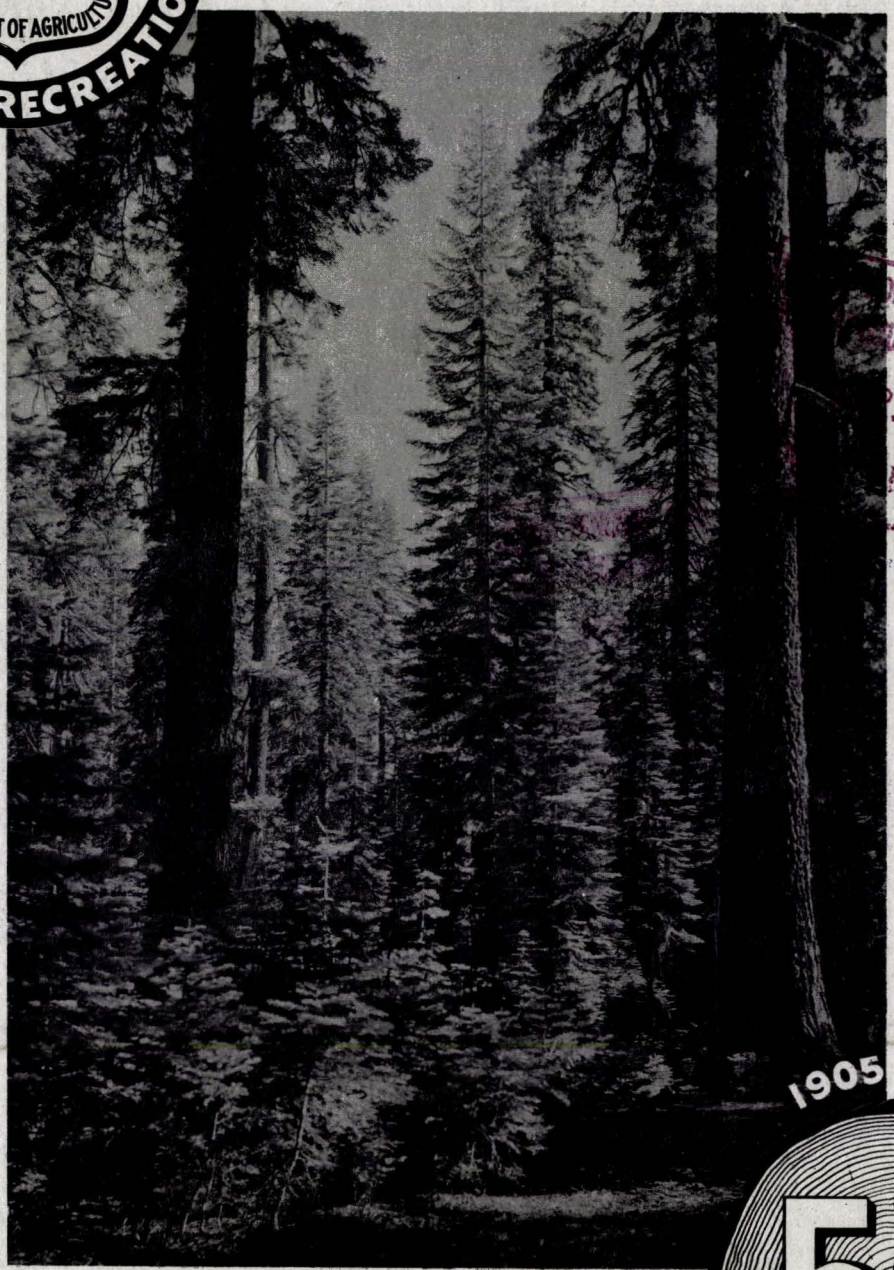
1955 ANNUAL REPORT



1905 - 1955

50 YEARS

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
CALIFORNIA REGION

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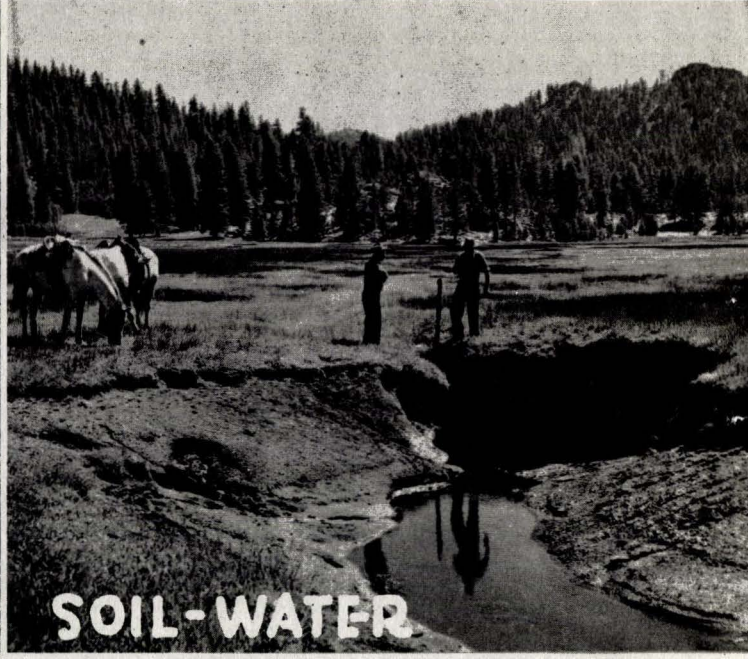
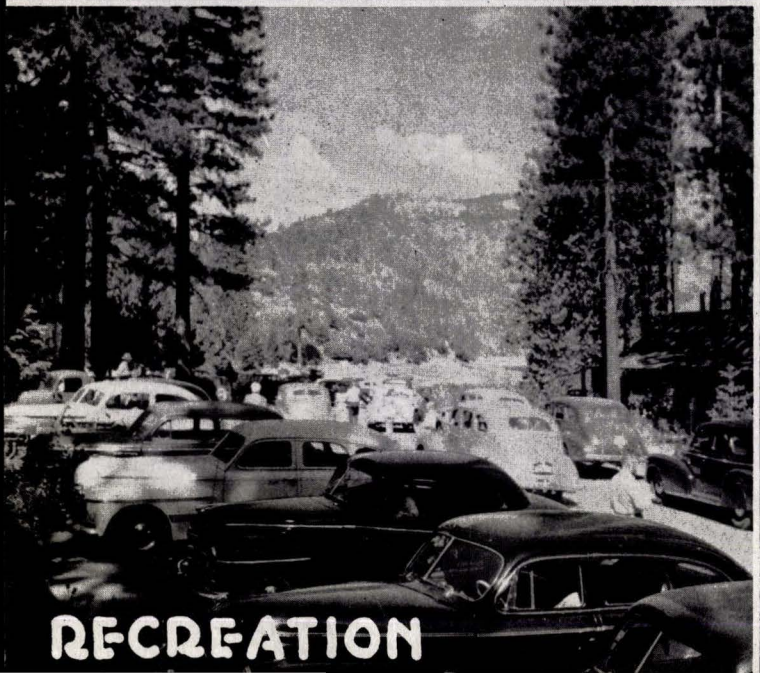


"... to perpetuate these resources to yield the greatest public good"



ANNUAL REPORT

of the REGIONAL FORESTER

CALIFORNIA REGION, FOREST SERVICE

##

The year 1955 marked the 50th anniversary year of the establishment of the Forest Service. Fifty years of progress in Forestry of the United States can be no better demonstrated than in the development in the administration of the National Forests from a custodial basis to that of a managed forest and wild land property.

The year 1955 will go down in the record books as an eventful year in the California Region. The year was marked by a continuing expansion of the demand for timber, forage, recreation and water. Some progress was made in meeting these demands.

The year began with below normal precipitation during the winter 1954-55. The wild lands of California, particularly the forest lands in the northwest corner of the state became dry far earlier than usual. As the summer progressed fire hazard conditions grew worse and worse until late August and early September when the Forest and Watershed lands of California were subjected to unprecedented losses from fire.

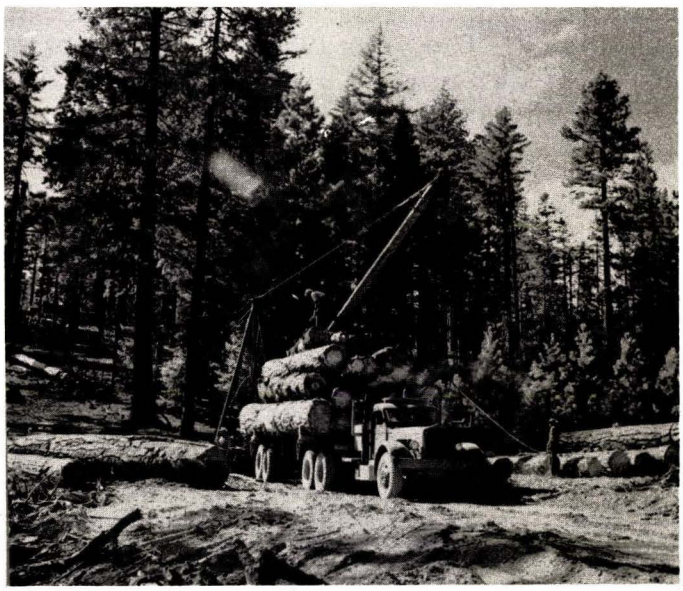
In an 18 day period beginning on August 27, the timber, brush and grass cover on 307,113 acres was destroyed by some 436 fires throughout the state. 132 of these fires burned 177,900 acres in the National Forests.

December rolled around and one of the most severe series of storms in weather bureau records hit Northern California. Storm upon storm buffeted the state, rivers and creeks rose to unprecedented heights. Again the personnel of the Forest Service rolled up their sleeves and went to work, first to do what had to be done to help others and protect property from damage and second to appraise the damage to the National Forests and see what could be done about it. It will be spring before all of the damage can be assessed. Fire and flood, the disaster twins came close together in 1955.

A study of the forest situation nationwide, known as the Timber Resources Review was completed this year. It is a cooperative study, a gathering of facts, made over a period of three years by private, state and federal forestry agencies. No more potent remark can be made than this, quoted from the summary of the review:

"Tomorrow the Nation's need for timber will be strikingly greater than it is today or at any other time in the past. - - - We have the potential to meet that need if we apply our forestry knowledge and skills promptly and with the utmost vigor and determination."

TIMBER RESOURCE - During 1955 the Region succeeded in moving one step closer to its goal of marketing and harvesting the calculated sustained yield volume of timber from the national forests.



1,001 million board feet were cut under sales contracts with operating lumber manufacturing companies.

1,300 million board feet were sold during the year under new sales contracts. This is the highest cut and sold volume of record in the California Region.

The volume cut amounts to 77 percent of the allowable under the sustained yield program, and 114 percent of the Region's goal for the year.

The timber sale program progressed smoothly until early September when one of the most critical fire situations in the decades occurred. Some 85,000 acres of commercial timber land on the national forests of the Region were seared killing and severely damaging 235 million board feet of merchantable timber.

Orderly progress of the regular sales program was interrupted to prepare salvage sales for the fire killed and severely damaged timber before deterioration by disease and insects. By December 31, 135 million had been sold and 100 million feet were in the process of being sold.

Pooling of qualified personnel and the wholehearted cooperation of the timber industry, which had many salvage problems of its own, made possible the assurance that practically all merchantable values will be salvaged within the two years it is estimated the job must be done.

Rapid removal of sound material is imperative as fire killed timber deteriorates fast.

4 years of maximum production by existing forest nurseries will be required to supply planting stock to reforest 1955 burns in the national forests of the California Region. Restoring these lands to productivity is a must if we are to meet the needs of tomorrow.

INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL - Insects and disease continue to take their toll of the forests of California. The loss of timber volume from these causes, though not so spectacular, is conservatively estimated to be several times the losses from fire.

Work was continued in Northern California on the program of decreasing insect losses through a well designed sales program directed at removing insect risk trees from the timber stands.

11,250 acres were treated for insect control in the four Southern California forests through the removal, by timber

sales, of 16 million board feet of risk trees. In earlier years these trees would have to be removed at a cost to the government or be left to aggravate the infestation. Through the sales program they were removed at a profit to the government and to private industry.

Blister rust control work was done on 24,490 acres of National Forest and 13,418 acres of state and private land under a cooperative program within delineated sugar pine management areas. In addition control work was completed on 10,573 acres of National Park land.

Initial control work is still needed on 111,000 acres in delineated areas and in National Parks.

During the year, work was continued on improving methods and increasing efficiency in the control program with the objective of doing the work more cheaply and efficiently.

ACCESS ROADS - Carefully planned timber sales this year resulted not only in an increased volume of cut but also to a speed up in construction of the timber access road system.

Approximately 136 miles of access road were built by operators under timber sales contracts. Construction progressed slowly but still lags far behind the needs.

Priority was again placed this year on keeping the engineering location and design work well ahead so that operators could proceed with contract construction without delays. This emphasis will be needed for several years and at least until the planned system is well ahead of the sales and construction program.

Preliminary location, survey, and design was completed on 159 miles. 9 miles of road were constructed using federal funds, during the year. This is only about 18 percent of the mileage needed in this category each year, to sustain the cut at the full allowable level.

FORAGE - 124,000 cattle and horses, and 132,000 sheep were permitted to graze on the national forest ranges in California in 1955. (Average grazing period of 4 months.)

In addition, the national forests provided forage for 500,000 deer, all or part of the year. (average about 9 months). The forage used by these deer alone is equivalent to nearly 2-1/2 times the permitted livestock use.

Slow but steady progress is being made toward more efficient utilization of range forage by livestock through the construction of control fences, corrals, water developments, etc. Full development of needed facilitating improvements will require a six fold increase in annual expenditures.

Average annual expenditures, over the past 10 years, amount to about $150,000, of which one third was permittee expenditures.

Quantity and Quality of range forage are being slowly improved by rehabilitation of depleted and burned over range lands. This consists of range reseeding, spraying of sage brush for released growth of forage plants, seeding of accidental burns and conversion of brush lands to grass land. In the past ten years, 70,000 acres have been treated this way.

During the past year, 3600 acres of range land received rehabilitation treatment. 2000 acres of this was treatment of brush type cover for conversion to grassland.

Reseeded burn after three years

TYPE CONVERSION - Field scale pilot projects in converting existing vegetative cover types to one of greater economic value and usefulness were continued and expanded during 1955 on the national forests. One or more such conversion projects are now under way on each of the 18 national forests in the Region.

Most of these projects are cooperative efforts between the Forest Service and other agencies or individuals including: livestock permittees, California Department of Fish and Game, sportsmen's organizations, and others.

Objectives of the projects include: replacement of unpalatable brush species with grass or browse for domestic livestock and wild game, betterment of wildlife habitat, removal of brush for tree planting and creation of type changes for fire control purposes.

Complete brush removal by fire on an area prepared by mashing brush with mechanical equipment. Only gentle foreground slopes treated. Steeper slopes left undistrubed for soil stability. White ash areas of burn form a desirable seedbed for reseeding to grasses.

RECREATION RESOURCE - Additional financing made possible some headway on the rehabilitation of a number of campgrounds, but continued increase in use caused recreation areas to remain occupied far beyond planned capacity. Financing for maintenance and improvement of forest recreation areas is still far from adequate.

A brochure describing the situation and needs was prepared this year, and is available on request.

The growing importance of winter recreation in the Region was highlighted by the award of the 1960 winter Olympic Games to Squaw Valley on the Tahoe National Forest. It will be the first time this international event has ever been held where national forest land is involved. Special liaison has been set up with the California Olympic Commission to assist with the planning, organizing, and general negotiations essential to insuring the success of the undertaking.

MINERAL RESOURCES - Developments occurred during 1955 which have an important bearing on national forest administration. Foremost of these is the passage of Public Law No. 167, 84th Congress (HR 5891). This law reserves certain surface rights and the right to the use of surface resources to the government on all future mining claims. It reserves common sand, stone, gravel, and the like from entry under the mining laws. Adequate provision for protection of the interests of mining claimants is provided. The law also provides a means for adjudicating the rights to the use of the surface resources on all past claims not yet patented.

This law is one which was drawn up jointly by members of the mining industry, the government and other interested groups.

It is the Forest Service program to resolve surface rights in all areas where there are conflicts with the use of surface resources within ten years.

Some financing was provided to implement the work on claims made prior to passage of the law, but much more is needed to clear up the huge back-log which is necessary so that the orderly harvest of timber and other resource uses can continue. Work was begun in some problem areas during 1955.

WILDLIFE - Fishing and hunting efforts on the national forests continue to increase by leaps and bounds. Increasing deer herds and increasing hunting pressure emphasize the need for continued attention to habitat management. Winter concentrations of big game pose one of our most serious problems.

Approximately 125,000 acres were cut over in varying degrees in the Forest Service timber sale program during 1955. Larger and larger areas are being cut over each year as the timber management program swings toward the full allowable sustained yield cut. This opening up of dense forest stands creates a more attractive home and temporarily increased food supplies for wildlife.

Special attention is given to the protection of national forest streams and lakes. This is becoming an increasingly important part of timber sale planning and administration - - to protect not only the cover and shade canopy over streams and lake shores, but also to protect the streams from erosion and siltation. This is an example of practical habitat management under multiple use principles of Forest Service administration.

Forests are the finest watershed cover we can have and with proper care and attention timber can be harvested without jeopardizing to an appreciable degree the value of streams for fish habitat and fishing enjoyment.

Stepped-up construction of access roads to remove timber also means better access for sportsmen and recreationists. These roads are being kept open to this use so far as prudent management and safety permit.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT - The national forests, with all of the other values, are watersheds. In California, water is the most important resource of the watersheds.

In the national forests watershed management is accomplished by protection and the orderly use of the vegetative and surface resources with objective of maintaining or enhancing the production of useful water.

When fires ravage the vegetative mantle of the watersheds such as occurred in 1955 and other years, corrective measures must be taken soon if we are to maintain the production of useful water and prevent damage.

While there are no adequate means to do a complete rehabilitation job in most areas, in some, where direct off site damage is eminent - such as in Southern California - the means are available.

Using Emergency Flood Control Funds, 80,000 acres of land were seeded for watershed protection alone during the last three years. 45,200 acres were on the Los Padres National Forest and almost 1,000 acres on the Angeles National Forest during 1955.

FIRE CONTROL - In spite of the fact that the period of August 27 to September 13th was probably the most critical forest fire period since 1924, man-caused fires decreased this year - - continuing a favorable trend. A total of 574 man-caused fires occurred. This is 127 fewer than last year and 185 fewer than the average for the last five years.

Lightning fires caused 893 fires as against 295 last year. The five year average is 1013 fires.

During the year 179,846 acres were burned by all fires in the national forest protection area. For comparison, the area burned in 1954 was 51,554 acres. The five-year average is 119,347 acres.

The need was emphasized more than ever, during 1955, to find ways and means of repairing damage and restoring land to productiveness in Northern California after fires.

The eighteen day critical fire period mentioned above was a statewide problem embracing the entire State -- in and out of the national forests. This is described more fully in a leaflet published in September.

The Fiscal Year 1955-56 was marked by a substantial increase in fire control funds for Southern California, bringing them one step nearer to the full protection level established by an analytical study of the entire fire problem. In addition, ~~two~~ 3 forests in the north - Klamath and Plumas - were financed nearer to the full requirements on an experimental basis. Results of these increases can only be measured over a period of years.

CONDENSED STATEMENT RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES
CALIFORNIA REGION - FOREST SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FISCAL YEAR 1955

	RECEIPTS*	EXPENDITURES	
		Operating	Investments
National Forest & L. U. Proj. Protection and Management		$5,308,959	$ 233,850
Fighting Forest Fires		3,704,165	0
Blister Rust Control		280,397	0
Forest Pest Control		36,059	0
Cooperative Range Improvements		19,626	6,742
Road and Trail - Const. & Maint.		1,358,094	3,116,154
Flood Prev. & Watershed Prot.		124,063	335,142
Cooperative Deposits	$ 159,267	168,339	
National Forest Receipts Forest Reserve Fund	11,852,112		
Land Use Areas (Title III Farm Tenant Act)	5,458		
Other Misc. Receipts	68,723		
TOTALS - Calif. Region	$12,085,560	$10,999,702	$3,691,888
Comparative Totals - U.S. All National Forests	$82,340,150	$50,144,523	$24,503,308

Note: Region estimates that other Federal agencies received and disposed of the following amounts for use of national forest lands which are not included in "Receipts" above:

By Federal Power Commission for power licenses	$ 250,000
By Interior for mineral leases on public domain national forest lands	$ 250,000

* 25% of the receipts are returned to the counties.

AGRICULTURE—FOREST SERVICE—SAN FRANCISCO

Carelessness Kills Tomorrow's Trees, Too!

Remember— Only you can

PREVENT FOREST FIRES!